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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a detailed analysis of a teaching evaluation conversation between Michael Darwin, high school principal, and teacher, Joseph Wolenko, in order to explore how both attended to issues of "face" during the evaluation process. The analysis draws on data from a larger study in an ethnomethodology/conversation analysis tradition. This evaluation focused on a video-taped lesson taught by Wolenko and evaluated by Darwin. The first section of talk-analysis shows Darwin helping Wolenko see himself as a good manager through his conversation. The second section shows how Darwin vigorously and successfully protects Wolenko from loss of face where there had been some obvious errors in instructional materials Wolenko had prepared. A following section shows Darwin focusing on an area that concerned him, student behavior, and criticizing Wolenko's discipline while through his conversational style and content mitigating loss of face and maintaining social solidarity. The next section describes the interview's end and Darwin's final summary of the evaluation which has walked a difficult line between having Wolenko confront areas for change while understanding nonetheless that Darwin recognized and appreciated him. The analysis concludes that attention to "face" issues may help to ensure that teachers will accept and use evaluations. (Contains 17 references.) (JB)

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Encouraging Evaluation Utilization by Preserving Teacher Self-Esteem

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Paper to be presented at the CREATE National Evaluation Institute,
July 1994, Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

Introduction

If evaluations are going to be used to improve teaching and learning, they need to be positively received by the evaluatee. At present, evaluation recommendations are often not implemented. Lawton et al. (1988) found that the amount of teacher improvement that occurred as a result of evaluations was not commensurate with the effort put into evaluation. Weber (1987) noted that as schools are "loosely coupled" organizations, teachers have considerable discretion as to whether they will implement suggestions for change. Duke and Stiggins (1990) have provided much information about factors that encourage teacher acceptance of feedback, including teacher participation in planning the evaluation, credibility of the evaluator and process, and practicality of suggestions for change. This paper assumes that in addition to the factors identified by Duke and Stiggins, teachers will be more likely to adopt suggestions for improvement if the evaluation process enhances their sense of dignity and self-worth.

The evaluation of teachers is widely recognized as extremely sensitive.[1] Scriven (1991) writes: "evaluation often acquires power because of its ties to possible action by decision makers but more generally because of its potential threat to self-esteem."[2] Lawton et al. (1988) express a similar view: "one of the major reasons for the difficulties associated with personnel evaluation is the intensity of the human interaction and the possibility of an adverse judgment about an individual's performance, a judgment that may damage a career or cause debilitating personal distress."[3] A crucial competency thus required by the

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[1] Goldhammer et al. (1980); Natriello (1990); Peterson and Comeaux (1990).
[2] Scriven (1991) pg. 141.
[3] Lawton et al. (1988) pg. 13.

evaluator is the ability to maintain a positive relationship with the teacher under such threatening circumstances. While research has generated much knowledge about the purposes, methods, organizational relationships and impact of teacher evaluation, and consideration has been given to the need for and difficulty of maintaining functional working relationships in the presence of such threat, very little is known about the specifics of how such relationship maintenance is realized.

Discourse analysis of an appraisal interview

The material in this paper is drawn from a study intended to begin to fill that void. The study is in the tradition of ethnomethodology /conversation analysis. The ethnomethodologist perceives the social world as the practical accomplishment of members, and ethnomethodological research is concerned with discovering how ordinary members construct their world. The social world in general is pervasively conversational. Therefore the analysis of conversation provides a powerful means of learning how social reality is constructed by members. Specifically, the use of conversation analysis to understand evaluation is warranted because the evaluation of teachers is accomplished largely through conversation between the evaluator and evaluatee.

In their talk members frequently attempt to avoid or minimize conflict and maintain the solidarity necessary for the continued functioning of the group. Brown and Levinson (1978) have analyzed the ways in which those engaged in conversation preserve "face", defined as "the public self-image that every member wants for himself" (positive face) and "the want to be unimpeded and the want to be approved of in certain respects" (negative face). They warn that face is "emotionally invested . . . can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction."[4] Brown and Levinson describe positive and negative politeness acts which might be expected to mitigate face threats.

Teacher evaluation provides much opportunity for the loss of both positive and negative face. Positive face is threatened if the teacher perceives him/herself to be criticized. Negative face is threatened when the supervisor suggests or demands change. Many of the face threatening acts identified by Brown and Levinson occur

[4] Brown and Levinson (1978) pp. 63-66.

during the evaluation of teachers: expressions of disapproval, criticism, reprimands, orders, requests, and suggestions.[5] As there is a need to maintain social relationships, acts which threaten these have been described as "dispreferred," or "disaffiliative", whereas acts that mitigate face threats are "affiliative" and "preferred."[6] The conversation analyst recognizes the presence of the structures of talk typically used to mitigate the damage potentially caused by dispreferred actions. This enables the analyst to learn how speakers maintain their social relationship despite the threatening nature of what they may say.

In this study, transcripts of tape-recordings of discussions between Greenwood High School principal Michael Darwin and teacher Joseph Wolenko were analyzed to learn how both parties attended to issues of face during the evaluation process. The purpose of such research is not to speculate upon what might be perceived as an affront to face but, by a close examination of the next speaker's response ("next's") to what the prior speaker ("prior") had said, to determine how it was perceived. Coulthard writes

> the aim of conversation analysis is not simply to show that "some aspect of conversation *can* be viewed" as being structured in a particular way, but also "that it actually is so conceived by the participants producing it." In other words, the turn taking mechanisms, the transition relevance set up by first pair parts and the existence of preferred and dispreferred second pair parts are significant because they are demonstrably "oriented to" by conversationalists.[7]

Assumptions about the likely effect of the evaluator's or evaluatee's actions are therefore avoided in this analysis. Instead, close attention is paid to what the replies ("seconds") to utterances reveal about the effect of what was said.

Evaluation conference talk partly consists of the offering of the evaluator's assessments of the work done by evaluatee. Pomerantz (1975) shows how it is through "second assessments" that the recipient of the first assessment displays

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[5] Brown and Levinson (1978) pp. 70-72.
[6] Heritage (1984) pp. 267-9.
[7] Coulthard (1985) pg. 74 citing Levinson (1983) pp. 318-19.

his/her response. Preferred seconds are "unmarked" and are structurally simpler than dispreferred seconds, which are marked by delays, prefaces, or accounts of why the preferred second cannot be performed. Pomerantz (1984) explains that agreement with a first assessment is usually but not always preferred. Specifically when the first assessment is self-critical, agreement will not be preferred.

Where the second assessment, be it agreement or disagreement, is dispreferred, it will typically be performed in a weak or minimized form. A weak form of agreement is a "same" evaluation, where an evaluative term is repeated in the second assessment. Pomerantz notes that same evaluations are relatively weak, because they are often used as "disagreement prefaces," i.e., they actually preface a disagreement component. The disagreement preface is separated from the disagreement component by some marker such as "but" or "although."

Changing a negative self-evaluation (1):
Poor supervisor to good manager

The first stretch of talk analyzed here shows how effective was the face-enhancing work done by principal Darwin. At the beginning of the meeting, Wolenko expressed doubt that he had exercized adequate supervision over his students. Wolenko, by his talk, helped to change that perception so that Wolenko saw himself as a good manager.

The context was that the evaluated lesson had been video-taped for this study. Students had therefore been required to return signed consent forms allowing them to participate, and those that had not were sent to the library instead.

24 W. That was the one part of the management thing that I really
25 had trouble with was. Once those guys were out of my
26 sight, I had no idea what they were doing in the library, or if
27 they made it to the library. I checked with ( ) after class,
28 and they said "Yeh, we were all in the library, and we were
29 working on the crossword puzzle, and there was talking and
30 stuff but we were working on it." So that part of it
31 bothered me as far as the kids that were ( ) and you kind of
32 lose them. And you don't want to just walk out of the class

33 to check on them either.

34 D. I'm sure that Barb will tell you, or you will probably check
35 with Barb today to see if there were any problems. Yeh, it's
36 awkward. But Claude had to have the ( )

Lines 24-33 expressed a negative self-assessment by Wolenko: because he could not allow students who had not returned consent forms to remain in the classroom, he had sent them to the library, and therefore was unable to supervise all the students for whom he was responsible. He expressed his concern about this situation: "That was the one part of the management thing that I really had trouble with" (lines 24-5) and "so that part of it bothered me" (lines 30-1).

Wolenko's self-assessment being negative, to maintain their social relationship the "preferred second" would have been for Darwin to shape his response to show his disagreement with the negative assessment, or at least to agree weakly. Darwin disagreed with Wolenko's negative self-assessment by reassuring Wolenko that if there had been a problem, he would have been told, (line 34) or could find out (lines 34-5). This disagreement was followed by an agreement component when he summarizes the situation described by Wolenko as "awkward." But by saying that Wolenko had had no choice because "Claude had to have the (forms)," he is telling Wolenko that he was not to blame for having had to send the students out. This is a face-saving, blame-shifting mechanism. It was the students' fault, not Wolenko's, that they had failed to return the forms, and so could not be permitted to remain in the classroom.

Wolenko's response shows that he accepted Darwin's reframing of the situation and is what Pomerantz classes as an "upgrade" of Darwin's shifting of the blame from Wolenko to the students.[8]

37 W. Yeh, oh I realize that. They had plenty of time. They had
38 two-and a half- three weeks to get these things done.

[8] Pomerantz (1984) pg. 65.

The upgrade is accomplished by emphasizing the amount of time the students had for attending to the return of the required forms. It shows, by the structure of Wolenko's response, how Darwin had "turned around" a negative, face threatening, self-evaluation. He had reframed the situation from the responsible teacher, Wolenko, being inadequate to the demands of the task, to the students having failed to return forms despite having had ample opportunity, merely suffering the consequences of their neglect. Wolenko had been transformed from a teacher whose performance of the important duty of supervising students was inadequate, to a teacher who had taken appropriate action in an "awkward" situation, i.e., one who had made the best of a bad situation for which he was not to blame.

Changing a negative self-evaluation (2):

Poor material preparer to hard-working teacher

The following stretches of talk (lines 105-35 and 180-204) shows a situation where Darwin vigorously and successfully protects Wolenko from loss of face where there had been some obvious errors in instructional materials which Wolenko had prepared.

105 D. Anything else
106 that you would say in reflecting upon the lesson that was
107 either good, bad - ?

108 W. Well I think that if I would have made less mistakes, the
109 crossword puzzle was good, because it got them flipping
110 back through their book, and discussing together, and
111 talking in terms of the play, and the characters. And it was a
112 good review and it was a good refresher to remember places
113 and names, and learn a language. Like they're starting to
114 learn some of the Elizabethan terms, and some of the
115 characters' names, and getting the places straight. It so it
116 was more like a little fun/review type of assignment. And I
117 think if I would have had better luck at making a couple of
118 less mistakes, it would have been better. But on the other
119 hand, the kids were able to pick out the mistakes, so that's
120 not so terrible either.

Wolenko structured his comments so as to preserve face by emphasizing the inherent instructional worth of the crossword, listing the many benefits the students obtained from the exercise, and de-emphasizing its faulty construction, even making a virtue of the students' being able to "pick out the mistakes."

Darwin's response showed him protecting Wolenko from the face loss threatened by Wolenko having to discuss with his principal inadequacies in his work that had become apparent during the observed lessons. Darwin agreed with Wolenko that the errors in the crossword had not been a "terrible" thing, and had actually offered some teaching opportunities:

121 D. I was even thinking at one time, that maybe, of course, you
122 could have said to them "Great. Now, can you fix it? There
123 are two bonus marks for any one that can find a mistake and
124 fix it." No, I wouldn't, firstly I wouldn't even worry about
125 the fact that there were mistakes on it, because you know if
126 you would have tried to cover up and say "Oh well, that's
127 what I intended", or - That's when a mistake is bad. But
128 when you make a mistake, especially when you've spent that
129 much time preparing it, and it the first time you've done it,
130 and all the kids recognize that.

Darwin introduces his suggestion for improvement with *two* prefaces: "maybe" and "of course" (line 121). "Maybe" expresses hesitation about suggesting change and structures the suggestion as dispreferred (threatening face by the suggestion that the other's performance could benefit from improvement). "Of course" implies that Wolenko already knows that he could have done what Darwin is suggesting, and invests Wolenko with face by implying that Darwin was not telling him anything new.

That Darwin's strategy of preserving Wolenko's face by minimizing the importance of Wolenko's error was successful can be heard in Wolenko's response, where he falls in with Darwin's positive focus on the work it had taken to create the

crossword, rather than to dwell on the negative fact that there had been errors:

131 W. I can't believe how difficult it was for them to do it. But to
132 get it all to match so that - and some of the names are so
133 strange, full of vowels, that it doesn't lead well into other
134 words. So I must have thrown out five or six different
135 efforts.

Later in the same meeting, Darwin returned to his consideration of the crossword puzzle episode, and expressed extremely strong approval of the puzzle:

180 I thought the crossword puzzle
181 was really excellent. If you were to spend ten minutes
182 watching this tape, I think you would be impressed with the
183 level of student participation and involvement. And if there
184 was one thing that I would consider to be more important
185 than anything else, in my observation of teachers, it is the
189 information, that's top rate.

Brown and Levinson write that one feature that distinguishes acts of positive politeness is an element of exaggeration.[9] To express such strong, even exaggerated, approval of what the other has done is a powerful act of positive politeness. It indicates strong affiliation with the other, and is extremely supportive of the other's positive self-concept. Darwin goes so far as to say that the impressive "level of student participation and involvement" is the one thing that he considers more important than anything else. This act provides a kind of reservoir of face that can be drawn against when doing future face-threatening acts. Darwin continued to express extremely strong approval when he summarized his evaluation of the crossword puzzle segment:

198 D. But they were really involved. And it was a good review.
199 And it did have them digging through their texts. And you
200 can't take anything for granted, especially 13, 23 and 33. If
201 you can get them to read! And when they're going through

[9] Brown and Levinson (1987) pg. 101.

202 this, they're definitely reading. Skimming through for
203 information. Look at the skills that they used as they were
204 completing the exercise!

Preserving face while criticizing discipline

In the next sequence discussed (lines 247-393), Darwin's talk abruptly shifted to that of a "critic," where having first re-stated his approval of Wolenko's having high expectations, his students' enthusiasm, and their practice of their skills, he moved onto an area that concerned him - the behaviour of the students. This segment of talk was different from the others considered so far in that it is apparent that there was an overriding face-saving strategy that transcended the specific face-saving devices contained within it. This overall strategy was to frame the noisiness of the class as a product of Wolenko's choosing, rather than the consequence of a class being out of control. There was a sharp contrast between the abrupt, bald on-record manner in which Darwin stated his criticism of the noisiness of the class, and the delicate sensitivity with which he later presented his suggestions for improvement.

247 D. So, your expectations are high,
248 they are enthused about what they are learning. As I say,
249 they were practicing the skills in the text of the play. The
250 class is raucous.

251 W. Yeh.

There was no transition between the generous praise of the previous comment, and the sudden criticism. Nor was there any other attempt to mitigate the force of the face-threatening act. To consider Brown and Levinson's view of the three kinds of circumstance when a bald on record face threatening act might be delivered, i.e. when (a) both parties tacitly agree that the relevance of face demands may be suspended in the interests of urgency or efficiency; (b) where the danger to H's face is *very* small and (c) where S is vastly superior in power to H, clearly (a) does not apply. There was no great urgency or need for efficiency. However, (b) might be considered to be applicable. On the surface, it would seem that the danger to face was quite large, in that to imply that a teacher's class control is not good is

generally considered to be a serious criticism. That Wolenko considered student control to be serious is clear from his concern about his inability to monitor those students who had to go to the library instead of attending his class. Yet because of the "reservoir" of face that had been built up by Wolenko's careful attention to face issues earlier in the meeting, the general threat to face had been greatly minimized. The alternative possibility is that (c) applies, which is that Darwin was trading on his "vast superiority in power." From the simple, undefensive, second that Wolenko offered, acknowledging the problem with a single word "yeh" (line 251), it would seem that the most likely explanation is that indeed sufficient reservoir of face had been stored up to render the face threat relatively small.

However, the following discussion was managed by Darwin in a manner that showed considerable sensitivity to face, and contrasted with the baldness of his introduction of the topic. Rather than launching into a discussion of student behaviour from the perspective of his own notions of appropriateness, he skillfully couched his criticism in terms of Wolenko's own discomfort over the fact that the students were hard to control.

252 D. And that kind of situation is not one that you and your
253 teaching style are comfortable with.

Wolenko's second assessment is an attempt to regain face. He brags about his ability to regain his class' attention by raising his voice.

254 W. One of the other things I wanted to mention about what I'm
255 happy about is, I think after nine years I'm confident enough
256 in my teaching that if things start to get out of hand, my
257 voice carries really well, and I can settle things down again
258 for awhile by raising my voice, or making a sharp comment,
259 or mentioning a name. When I was younger, I tended to be
260 more along the lines of buddying them, and trying to sway
261 them to my viewpoint. Whereas now, I just - my voice -
262 I'm really lucky, my voice carries well in the gym and
263 things.

264 D. Yeh.

265 W. Through coaching and that. And there are times I can settle
266 things down to a level again for a while, which I've been
267 happy with.

Darwin, however, is not satisfied that that is necessarily the best way of dealing with such situations, and suggests that there is a better way to maintain control than the aggressive methods (loudness, sharpness, and "mentioning a name") Wolenko has been describing. He prefaces his disagreement with Wolenko's positive assessment of his skill by an agreement preface "Yeh, I've noticed that too" (line 268), which actually prefaces his *dis*agreement with the claim that Wolenko has made.

268 D. Yeh, I've noticed that too. In fact talking about the voice, I
269 wondered at times if maybe you shouldn't shock them to try
270 and - if rather than raising your voice.

271 W. Go lower?

272 D. Go lower. Because, especially with a class that tends to be
273 raucous like that, the louder you speak, then, you get kind
274 of a "who can make the most noise sort of thing here."

Darwin takes care not to discount what Wolenko has said, but merely to suggest an alternative. The use of the word "shock" (line 269) is especially interesting. Wolenko had described his use of aggressive "shock tactics" (lines 258). Darwin's use of "shock" seems to accord with the kinds of tactics Wolenko has been reporting, and thus preserve Wolenko's face by affiliating with him. But it actually proposes something quite different: to "shock" the students by the use of a very *gentle* approach, the lowering of his voice. To use the same word that Wolenko has, "shock," but to use it to convey the opposite meaning is a very subtle negative politeness technique: to suggest an alternative action that could be understood as in the same class of action that is being proposed be abandoned. Thus the proposal for change is couched in terms that could be understood as not suggesting change at all. It exemplifies what Brown and Levinson refer to as an "off record" face threatening

act, which "hints as to what a speaker wants to communicate, without doing so directly, so that the meaning is to some degree negotiable."[10]

Even in proposing a different way of controlling the class, he takes care to acknowledge that Wolenko does have the ability to control a class that he claims:

274 D. But,
275 I'm not disagreeing about what you say. You do have
276 control, you do have the power. And when you exercise it,
277 whether it be with a sharp comment or reprimand, or
278 whether it be just raising your voice, things come under
279 control. But, I don't know. Just a technique to follow.

280 W. Definitely.

Darwin's termination of his turn with the low key "but, I don't know. Just a technique to follow" (line 279) minimizes the threat. It emphasizes that Darwin is merely making a suggestion, which Wolenko is at liberty to use if he wants to. That Wolenko found Darwin's manner of presenting the suggestion inoffensive is seen as likely by his ready acceptance: "definitely" (line 280).

Darwin made a number of suggestions as to how Wolenko might improve the discipline of the English 13 class: begin the lessons on time, have the students correct each others' work in spelling lessons, arrive early for class, and utilize student monitors for routine tasks. Darwin was embarking on a classic negative face threat situation: Wolenko's freedom of action was being threatened by his principal's suggesting that he do things differently than had been his practice. Darwin introduced his suggestions with "it struck me that there are a few little things that you could do that would make it a bit easier," (Lines 293-4) and his use of the qualifiers "few little" (things) and "a bit" (easier) are additional examples of actions taken to maintain social solidarity, face, in the presence of this threat.

[10] Brown and Levinson (1978) pg. 74.

Begin class on time

The first suggestion Darwin made, was that Wolenko ensure that he always start the lesson precisely on time, as a way of encouraging students to be punctual:

296 Spelling. Um, you know. Kids are coming in late, they're
297 not settling down, it's a lovely day and they've been outside,
298 and all that sort of thing. Especially when you're starting
299 teaching. What the hell are you going to do? Um, how
300 about dispensing with announcements? Dispensing with
301 attendance, all that stuff. And as soon as that last bell rings,
302 spelling test. Number 1. Number 2. Number 3. Those
303 that come in late, they've missed the first three words. Not
304 being harsh at all. It's just that -

305 W. Just adding more structure.

The face saving device used here was to present the problem of getting students to class on time as very difficult, as though it would be almost unreasonable to expect them to be punctual: the weather is not only nice, it is "a lovely day" (line 297). "What the hell" (line 299) is the (unfortunate) teacher to do. The profanity "what the hell" served to assert the collegiality of the relationship.[11] Only close associates would appropriately use language like that. In and of itself, that served to "give face" to Wolenko. The calm, accepting, non-defensive nature of Wolenko's reply, "Just adding more structure" (line 305) suggests that Darwin's approach was successful.

Have students correct each other's work

In discussing the spelling test episode itself (as opposed to the logistics of getting the class settled to begin), Darwin became more directly critical of Wolenko,

[11] See Brown and Levinson (1978) pp. 112-117 for the use of "in-group markers."

though even then taking care not to totally repudiate that which he was criticizing.

308 D. Now
309 when you get to the correcting portion, you know there are
310 a lot of ha ha's, gafoos, if that's even a word, as they started
311 to correct. Then, and quite frankly you were encouraging it,
312 you were having some fun with it. And that's all right, too.
313 But if a person really wanted to structure it, it's give the
314 spelling test, "exchange work, take out your spelling sheet,
315 and correct each others'". What would be -and I'm sure
316 you've already done that - what would be some of the
317 advantages of them correcting each others' from their
318 spelling sheets?

Darwin is engaging in the "dispreferred", face-threatening activity of telling Wolenko that his practice regarding the correction of the spelling test was not effective. The preface "quite frankly" (line 311) announced the imminent dispreferred action. In her discussion of the structure of disagreement turns, Pomerantz writes of the dispreferred action of disagreeing with a prior speaker being softened by subsequent assertions that narrow the gap between the positions of the two speakers, by the performer of the dispreferred action backing away, to an extent, from the dispreferred position[12]. Darwin does something similar when he minimizes the importance of that aspect of the teaching that he was criticizing -- that Wolenko was encouraging the raucousness -- by the utterance "but that's all right too" (line 312).

When Darwin wants to determine whether Wolenko understands the advantages of the alternative procedure he is suggesting -- that Wolenko have the students correct each other's work -- by asking him what he advantages of such a procedure might be, he prefaces his question with "I'm sure you've already done that" (lines 315-6). It is not clear whether Darwin means Wolenko has already used the technique suggested, or that Wolenko has already thought through the benefits of having students correct each other's work, but either way, for Darwin to say "I'm sure you've already done that," was to invest Wolenko with face by addressing him

[12] Pomerantz (1975) pg. 77.

as a professional who is aware of the alternative methods of instruction, and has chosen not to use the one in question.

Wolenko accepts the measure of face offered, by replying in some detail, showing that he has understood the matter being discussed. Wolenko thus presents himself as a thoughtful, reflective professional, discussing the merits of a proposed course of action, and not merely a neophyte, receiving direction on how to teach:

319 W. Well, obviously they're reading. They're reading their own.
320 And they're having to compare the letters. So they're
321 actually taking the other role, and correcting it. So they're
322 actually going to learn from it.

Darwin adds to Wolenko's response, thereby implicitly acknowledging Wolenko's ability to participate in the professional discussion, and not merely receive instruction:

323 D. So not only would you be imposing more structure, there
324 would be more quiet, more control and, quite frankly, I'm
326 at least, doesn't want that. But the other part of you is
327 uncomfortable with the results of not having the control.

Arrive early for class

Darwin moved on to the topic of the importance of the teacher being punctual, even though he acknowledged that Wolenko was in class on time:

356 D. Another thought is in terms of the beginning of the class,
357 because the beginning of the class is just so difficult. It's,
358 um, you have to arrive on time. You were.

Why, if Wolenko was on time for the observed lesson, did Darwin raise the issue? Perhaps he had noted that Wolenko had not been punctual on other occasions, or that he had been only barely on time on the observed lesson. One does not know. However, Darwin emphasizes that punctuality is not good enough, the

teacher should be early.

359 D. I think with these kids, if anything, we have to be
360 there three minutes - and I don't know if you've noticed,
361 with myself, that I just have to get out of the classroom
362 down the hallway, because I need three four minutes to just
363 handle stupid things that they ask me to do. So we've got
364 to be there on time.

The dispreferred action here is that Darwin is pressing Wolenko to make a greater effort than he, presumably, already is making: He is being asked to be present in class three or four minutes early. Heritage[13] writes of the "no blame" accounts that may be given on such occasions to preserve the social solidarity in the face of such threats. In this case, it is the "stupid things" (line 363) that students ask the teacher to do that are blamed for making it necessary that the teacher be there so early. It is not Wolenko or Darwin's fault that students ask these stupid things. It is simply a matter of fact that they do.

Use student monitors

Darwin's advice that Wolenko use student monitors is expressed in a way that recognizes that the source of knowledge about effective teaching practice might rest with other teachers, and not only with himself, the designated "instructional leader":

364 I notice that some teachers like
365 [names] use a lot of student monitors. And I've just started
366 to do this in my class. It seems to me that if we put them in
367 charge of maybe doing the attendance. Put them in charge
368 of getting the television set. Put them in charge of handing
369 things out, and all that kind of stuff, they're not doing
370 whatever it is that they would normally be doing. So that
371 was another thought I thought you might have a look at.

[13] Heritage (1984) pg. 268.

Other teachers, including Darwin, make use of student monitors. So perhaps it would be a good idea for Wolenko to do likewise. But rather than simply citing his own success with the technique as the reason for recommending it, he says that he learned the use of student monitors from others: "I notice that some teachers like [names of teachers] use a lot of student monitors. And I've just started to do this in my class." By acknowledging that he learned the technique from other teachers, he models openness to the professional example of others. In so doing, he also reasserts the collegiality of himself and Wolenko: Darwin is not, in this case, the master teacher whom Wolenko is to emulate. Rather, like Wolenko, he is a teacher who also can learn from his colleagues.

As was observed in an earlier incident, the collegial talk, however, is again a mere interlude, as Darwin shifts register to that of supervisor, directly instructing Wolenko to make changes to increase his control, despite that not being in his style:

372 D. Um, I think that somehow or other you got to take a little
373 bit more control. And yet, that's not part and parcel of your
374 teaching style, to take a lot of control. So, on the one hand,
375 in English 10, we're saying "Gee Joe, let's try letting them
376 go, Let's see how far they go." And you're saying "Yeh,
377 that's what I want to do, like that's really what fuels me, and
378 then in English 13, we're saying "you have to get more
379 control." And that's not what you want to do. And yet you
380 don't want the level of noise and all that. Although the noise
381 is productive, and it was for the most part. You know what
382 I'm saying? I guess I'm being a little bit critical of the fact
383 that there's more exuberance there than I as a teacher
384 could be comfortable with.

385 W. Yeh.

386 D. But that's something that you've got to assess for yourself
387 as to how much you're comfortable with.

Telling Wolenko to change is dispreferred, socially threatening. The potential for loss of face is reduced by Darwin's use of minimizing adjectives: a "little bit"

more control (lines 379-81). Darwin reduces the force of his criticism by continuing to downplay the problem of the noisy class, even to the extent of denying that it really was a problem, except to Wolenko himself: "Yet you don't want the level of noise and all that. Although the noise is productive, and it was for the most part" (lines 379-81). If the noise was for the most part productive, why is Wolenko criticized for allowing it? Face is protected by Darwin's not being simply "critical", but "a little bit critical" (line 382). The justification for the criticism is that Darwin "as a (fellow) teacher" (rather than supervisor) could not be comfortable with the level of noise: The switch from Darwin's direction to the final "but that's something that you've got to assess for yourself as to how much you're comfortable with" (lines 386-7) is credible only in terms of face-investment. Darwin has made it very clear that he is dissatisfied with the noise level in the class. To then say that the teacher is free to decide how much noise he is comfortable with, is a face giving gesture.

Wolenko's response shows that he has accepted Darwin's view that the behaviour of the students was unsatisfactory. He analyses the lesson, distinguishing three segments in terms of the student behaviour, and his own reaction, declaring "the spelling test part to be the most bothersome" (lines 389-90):

388 W. I think, like, that there three definite levels in the class, and I
389 found out of the three, I found the spelling test part to be
390 the most bothering. It was the most silly and the most
391 unstructured. And then when we did the paragraphing and
392 the essays, it was - I was really impressed. They were
393 quiet. They were offering suggestions.

Interview wrap-up

The final segment of the interview considered (lines 435-576) moves from Darwin commending Wolenko on his good "modeling," through inviting him to review the video tape that Darwin made of the lesson which he had observed, to a final summation of the evaluation of the lesson. In this summation, Darwin frames the entire lesson in an extremely positive way, ignoring his criticism, and acting in a way likely to ensure that Wolenko leaves the evaluation experience with his face very

much intact.

435 D. Modeling. I wanted to hit on your
436 modeling. You do the best job of that I have ever seen.
437 You keep modeling. You read to them something that you
438 had written. You write on the blackboard. "This is the way
439 I want you to do it." You review. "How do we handle
440 quotations ( ) ?" The modeling was excellent.

The praise is generous, contrasting with, and in a sense making up for, his criticism of the spelling lesson. Modeling was not merely well done, it was described as "the best job of that I have even seen" (line 436). To be able to model effectively was described as more than an acquired technical skill, it was an admirable part of Wolenko's personality: "it's just a natural for you"(line 459). To express admiration for one's personality has been recognized as a strong act of positive politeness.[14] That Wolenko agrees ("Yeh") (line 461) with this positive assessment, is not surprising!

458 D. You do much
459 spontaneous modeling. That it's just a natural for you, with
460 those kids you've got. And again, they're taking notes.

461 W. Yeh.

462 D. Like you'd focus and say "I want you to make a point of
463 this," but they're doing it.

Darwin offered Wolenko the opportunity to review the video-tape that had been made of the lesson:

463 D. If you watched on the camera,
464 you'd find that every bloody student, you know followed
465 that ( )

[14] Brown and Levinson (1987) pg. 101.

Darwin's use of the profanity "bloody" works in the same was as his "what the hell" (line 299) discussed above. It serves as an "identity marker" implying the collegiality of the relationship, giving face to Wolenko.

In the guise of forecasting what he expected to see, Wolenko continued the process of reframing the unsatisfactory spelling lesson as an admirable example of variety in the activities of the day:

471 W. I think what I'm going to find, too, when I watch this class
472 again is out of the three things, the spelling test is going to
473 give me like a break as far as the different atmosphere, and
474 how its almost like a completely separate - it would look
475 like it's a different day unit, because -

476 D. Yeh, because it's going to be that, that structured

477 W. Because it went from kind of loud and boring on - well, you
478 know, hard to control. And then it went from that to quiet
479 and attentive and co-operative. And then it went to loud
480 again, and got focused and hands on.

Darwin accepts Wolenko's interpretation, affirming his agreement with the "agreement token"[15] "yeh" (line 476), and reiterates his own positive account for what had happened: that the class was noisy because Wolenko had decided that that was what he wanted:

481 D. And all of it was with your permission.

482 W. That's true.

483 D. You see, you were in control all the time. For example, you
484 were were the most raucous during the spelling. But you
485 were having fun, and you were coming up with these
486 definitions, and you were laughing at them, you know.

[15] Pomerantz (1975) pg. 64.

487 Nothing wrong with that. It's just - I guess what I'm trying
488 to say is that you have the control. And you can do what
489 you want with it. But quite frankly, you hit upon it. You are
490 fueled by them. (.). So, if they're being silly and raucous,
491 you're fueled by that. And you - that's the way you go.
492 And, as you say, it got to a point that you weren't
493 comfortable with it and you stopped it. And as soon as you
494 decided to stop it, it's off.

495 W. Yeh.

496 D. And you changed it right around. So

Wolenko's second to Darwin's very positive assessment showed that Wolenko was not entirely convinced that things quite as positive as Darwin was making them out to be.

497 W. I guess I should be happy about that.

His use of the preface "I guess" is indicative of his doubts. It is a weak form of agreement with Darwin's assessment. Darwin, however, shapes his response as an "upgrade," with his enthusiastic emphasis on the "I guess!"

498 D. Well, I guess!

Wolenko "buys in" to Darwin's positive appraisal, as can be seen in his response, where he contrasts his ability to control the situation, with one that was out of control:

499 W. Because I guess in some situations, you could be caught
500 where it couldn't stop. Or it wouldn't stop.

Darwin proceeds to downgrade, to minimize, the importance of his face-threatening, dispreferred, suggestion that a more structured environment was needed by prefacing his concluding comments on the matter with the down-grade "and all

that I'm saying":

501 D. And all that I'm saying with the spelling suggestions, is that
502 your intention, your objective, is to get some spelling with
503 these kids. And so, there's a time where more structure, and
504 increasing the level of student involvement again by having
505 them correct each others' ( )

506 W. That would be good, a good way to bring the tone down
507 quickly, too.

Darwin has radically reframed the matter of the noise in the spelling lesson. It (the noise) has been reframed from a situation that was not sufficiently in the control of the teacher, to one where "all of it was with your [Wolenko's] permission" (line 481). Wolenko's face has been saved, even at the cost of momentarily inviting Wolenko to accept the noisy class as legitimate, even admirable in that Wolenko was supposedly in control of the situation. Wolenko has been transformed from a teacher whose class was out of control, to a reflective teacher who enjoys a certain amount of noisiness, but can stop it whenever he wants to. Darwin's closing comments framed the entire evaluation, even those parts of Wolenko's practice which he had criticized, in a positive light.

566 D. Well, I thought the real highlight of
567 that lesson was the crossword puzzle, because of the
568 active involvement. The spelling was certainly a great idea,
569 they need that. The modeling, during the essay, was a high
570 spot. And I guess what I'll remember for a long time about
571 English 13 is how you had control. You can do with it
572 whatever you want. And I guess it makes a person feel
573 good if you say after nine years of teaching that you have
574 that confidence, so that you know you can -

575 W. Carry on.

Wolenko is able to "carry on." His dignity has been preserved, his confidence bolstered. The evaluation has certainly demanded much of him in terms of

reflectiveness upon his own practice. Darwin has managed to walk the tight line between having the teacher confront those aspects of his practice that required change, and not allowing that negative aspect of the evaluation to obscure the teacher's sense that his good work was recognized and appreciated by his principal.

Conclusion

Because it is largely through talk that evaluations are accomplished, evaluators need to be sensitized to the impact of talk. This study focused on the role of evaluation talk in the preservation and enhancement of "face." Whilst some individuals are naturally polite, intuitively aware of the potential of talk to damage or enhance face and conduct themselves accordingly, there are others whom we characterize as "rude" or "tactless." Presumably such persons could benefit from training to specifically sensitize them to issues of face and the importance and methods of mitigating against face-threats.

If the products of evaluations are not used, the enterprise is largely a waste of time. By being aware of the importance of attending to the evaluatees face needs, and by learning how to do so, the likelihood of evaluations being used is greatly increased.

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